

# **CITY STREETS AS PART OF STATE HIGHWAYS**

## **GUIDELINES REACHED BY THE WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON CITIES ON THE INTERPRETATION OF SELECTED TOPICS OF RCW 47.24 AND FIGURES OF WAC 468-18-050 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITIES OF WSDOT AND CITIES FOR SUCH STREETS**

**April 30, 1997**

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### **CITY STREETS AS PART OF STATE HIGHWAYS**

The jurisdiction, control, and duty of the state and city or town for city streets that are a part of state highways is specified in RCW 47.24.020; however, the implementing WAC's, directives and manuals have been subject to interpretation. This report documents agreed upon guidelines that have been reached by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) on the interpretation of construction, operations and maintenance responsibilities of WSDOT and cities for such city streets.

These agreed upon guidelines are derived from:

- The draft Task Force Report on City Streets As Part Of State Highway.
- Response to the legislative change that increased the 15,000 city population threshold to a 22,500 population threshold for state versus city responsibilities for certain maintenance responsibilities contained in RCW 47.24.
- Additional discussions by the Department, AWC and several cities on the interpretation of state versus local agency maintenance responsibilities that are illustrated in figures contained in WAC 468-18-050 and on other maintenance responsibilities for city streets that are part of state highways.

These guidelines are designed to facilitate the allocation of maintenance responsibilities between the WSDOT and Washington Cities pursuant to RCW 47.24. The guidelines of this report are not intended to reflect past practices but to apply to future practices. They are general in nature and do not preclude the WSDOT and individual cities from entering into agreements to address particular circumstances.

These agreed upon guidelines will be incorporated in WSDOT manuals and related guidance for maintenance, operations, and construction activities. AWC will distribute copies of this report to their members.

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## AGREED UPON GUIDELINES

The agreed upon guidelines of State and city responsibilities for city streets that are part of state highways are contained in the following tables:

- [Table 1](#), City/State Maintenance Responsibilities For City Streets As Part Of The State Highway System
- [Table 2](#), City/State Maintenance Responsibilities Of Bridges That Convey Non-Limited Access State Highways That Are Also City Streets (Unless Otherwise Covered Under A Separate Agreement)
- [Table 3](#), State Owned Bridges That Convey City Or County Traffic Over A Limited Access Or Non-Limited Access Highway Corridor (Does Not Apply To City Or County Owned Bridges)

The following is an explanation of selected items of the above tables that are related to specific sections of RCW 47.24 and to WAC 468-18-050:

### 1. Guardrail (Barriers) Maintenance

**Background:** RCW 47.24.020(2) states that "The city or town shall exercise full responsibility for and control over any such street beyond the curbs and if no curb is installed, beyond that portion of the highway used for highway purposes." The statement "...used for highway purposes..." has led to differing interpretations of WSDOT and local agency responsibilities for the maintenance of guardrail.

**Agreed Upon Guideline:** Traffic barriers installed on state highways in areas without curbs shall be maintained by the WSDOT. Traffic barriers installed beyond the curb shall be maintained by the cities. Curb in the context of RCW 47.24.020(2) refers to a standard curb and gutter and not to extruded curb such as those placed on fill sections for erosion control. Guardrail, concrete barriers, impact attenuators and similar devices are all considered to be traffic barriers.

### 2. Parallel Ditches and Cross Culverts

**Background:** The issue is clarification of what is meant by the RCW 47.24.020(2) statement "...for highway purposes..." for use in interpreting responsibilities of WSDOT and local agencies for maintenance of parallel ditches and cross culverts. Also at issue is responsibility for grass lined swale construction for water treatment purposes as compared to a ditch solely for drainage purpose. In addition a distinction needs to be made between cross culverts related to streams and maintaining natural flows as opposed to those constructed for storm drainage.

**Agreed Upon Guideline:** Within all cities, regardless of population, the state shall solely maintain the structural integrity of box culverts, multiplates and individual culverts greater than 60 inches in width that are within rights of way and are not part of an enclosed drainage system. These are the size appropriate to identify natural stream flows. These structures that are less than 60 inches in width will be maintained by the cities. Cities shall maintain all other parallel roadside ditches and road approach culverts. Grass-lined swales constructed by the state solely for state highway runoff will be maintained by the WSDOT.

### 3. Betterments - Pavement Markings

**Background:** RCW 47.24.020(13) provides that cities and towns having a population greater than 22,500

are responsible to install, maintain, operate and control all traffic control devices. This has been interpreted to mean that the city or town must replace pavement markings and similar devices when a street is resurfaced (i.e., these markings are not included in the project costs). The issue is that a WSDOT project may destroy very recently installed pavement markings that, especially if they are durable markings (e.g., thermoplastic, raised pavement markers, etc.), involve expense to the city. The cities recommend that in-kind replacement of these markings be a part of the project costs.

**Agreed Upon Guideline:** As a part of State reconstruction/resurfacing projects the State will replace in-kind at no cost to the local agency only pavement markings that are damaged or removed as a result of the reconstruction or resurfacing project. This does not apply to durable pavement markings that have exceeded their useful life. Installation of higher quality pavement markings will be at the expense of the city.

Early communication and plan reviews between WSDOT and the city is essential to enable local agencies to avoid installation of pavement markings, especially the more durable markings, shortly before the construction activity takes place.

#### 4. Snow Plowing

**Background:** At issue is the meaning of the phrase in RCW 47.24.020(6) that states "...except that the state shall when necessary plow the snow on the roadway." This statute states that the city or town, at its expense, is responsible for snow removal. The meaning of "when necessary" and responsibility of snow plowing versus snow removal needed clarification.

**Agreed Upon Guideline:** RCW 47.24.020(6) provides that the cities have responsibility for snow removal within their jurisdiction and that the State shall, when necessary, plow the snow on the roadway. The meaning of "when necessary" is that the State will plow snow, with city concurrence, on the traveled lane of the state highway on the way through the cities not having adequate snow plowing equipment.

**Table 1**  
**City/State Maintenance Responsibilities For City Streets As Part Of The State Highway System**

Maintenance Item	Cities Over 22,500	Cities Under 22,500
Roadway Surface	State	State
Roadway Shoulders	State	State
Stability of Cut & Fill Slopes	City	State
Sidewalks	City	City
Curbs	State	State
Parallel Roadside Ditches	City	City
Road Approach Culverts	City	City
Cross Culverts	City [3]	City [3]
Snow Plowing	See Note [4]	See Note [4]
Sanding & De-icing	City	City
Snow Removal	City	City
Sand Removal	City	City

Channelization	City [1]	State
Crosswalks	City [1]	State
Striping	City [1]	State
Directional Signs/ Route Markers	State	State
Parking Signs	City	City
Regulatory Signs	City	State
Stop Signs (Intersecting Streets)	City	State [7]
Signals	City	State
Guardrail, Concrete Barrier, Impact Attenuators, etc.	State/City [2]	State/City [2]
Illumination	City [6]	City [6]
Street Cleaning	City	City
Street Sweeping	City	City
Vegetation	City	City
Noxious Weeds	City [5]	City [5]
R/W Encroachments	City	City
R/W Cleanup	City	City
Utility Franchises	City	City
Underground Facilities	City	City

[1] As a part of State reconstruction/resurfacing projects the State will replace in-kind at no cost to the local agency only pavement markings that are damaged or removed as a result of the reconstruction or resurfacing project. This does not apply to durable markings that have exceeded their useful life. Installation of higher quality pavement markings will be at the expense of the city. Early communication and plan reviews between WSDOT and the city is essential to enable local agencies to avoid installation of pavement markings, especially the more durable markings, shortly before the construction activity takes place.

[2] Traffic barriers installed on state highways in areas without curbs shall be maintained by the WSDOT. Traffic barriers installed beyond the curb shall be maintained by the cities. Curb in the context of RCW 47.24.020(2) refers to a standard curb and gutter and not to extruded curb such as those placed on fill sections for erosion control. Guardrail, concrete barriers, impact attenuators and similar devices are all considered to be traffic barriers.

[3] Within all cities, regardless of population, the state shall solely maintain the structural integrity of box culverts, multiplates and individual culverts greater than 60 inches in width that are within rights of way and are not part of an enclosed drainage system. These are the size appropriate to identify natural stream flows. These structures that are less than 60 inches in width will be maintained by the cities. Cities shall maintain all other parallel roadside ditches and road approach culverts. Grass-lined swales constructed by the state solely for state highway runoff will be maintained by the WSDOT.

[4] RCW 47.24.020 (6) provides that the cities have responsibility for snow removal within their jurisdiction and that the State shall, when necessary, plow the snow on the roadway. The meaning of "when necessary" is that the State will plow snow, with city concurrence, on the traveled lane of the state highway on the way through the cities not having adequate snow plowing equipment.

[5] RCW 47.24.020(2) states the city or town shall exercise full responsibility for and control over any such street beyond the curbs and, if no curb is installed, beyond that portion of the highway used for highway purposes and, thus, are responsible for noxious weed control.

[6] The state has responsibility for maintenance of illumination systems within fully access controlled areas. In addition, the State may, with city concurrence, maintain and operate luminaires at locations where the electrical service powers electrical equipment under both State and City responsibility.

[7] WSDOT, with city concurrence, may install stop signs and posts to the city's standards or may contract with the city to have them perform these installations.

[Return to Table 1](#)

**Table 2**

**City/State Maintenance Responsibilities Of Bridges That Convey Non-Limited Access State Highways That Are Also City Streets (Unless Otherwise Covered Under A Separate Agreement)**

(This table provides an interpretation of the figures of WAC 468-18-050)

<b>Maintenance Item</b>	<b>Cities Over 22,500</b>	<b>Cities Under 22,500</b>
Structural Related Bridge Maintenance	State	State
Bridge Condition Inspections	State	State
L/C Overlays on Structures	State	State
Bridge Deck Membranes	State	State
Structural Asphalt Overlay on Bridge	State	State
Non-Structural Asphalt Overlay on Bridge	State	State
Approach Slab	State	State
Bridge Deck Joints	State	State
Bridge Railing	State	State
Graffiti	City	City
Deck Sweeping	City	City
Bridge Drains/Drainage	City	State
Striping	City	State
Illumination	City [2]	City [2]
Snow Plowing	See Note [1]	See Note [1]
Snow Removal	City	City

[1] RCW 47.24.020(6) provides that the cities have responsibility for snow removal within their jurisdiction and that the State shall, when necessary, plow the snow on the roadway. The meaning of "when necessary" is that the State will plow snow, with city concurrence, on the traveled lane of the state highway on the way through the cities not having adequate snow plowing equipment.

[2] The state has responsibility for maintenance of illumination systems within fully access controlled areas. In addition, the State may, with city concurrence, maintain and operate luminaires at locations where the electrical service powers electrical equipment under both State and City responsibility.

[Return to Table 2](#)

**Table 3****State Owned Bridges That Convey City Or County Traffic Over A Limited Access Or Non-Limited Access Highway Corridor (Does Not Apply To City Or County Owned Bridges)**

(This table provides an interpretation of the figures of WAC 468-18-050)

<b>Maintenance Item</b>	<b>City / State</b>	<b>County / State</b>
Structural Related Bridge Maintenance	State	State
Bridge Condition Inspections	State	State
LMC Overlays on Structures	State	State
Bridge Deck Membranes	State	State
Structural Asphalt Overlay on Bridge	State	State
Non-Structural Asphalt Overlay on Bridge	City [1]	County [1]
Approach Slab	City [2]	County [2]
Bridge Deck Joints	See Note [3]	See Note [3]
Bridge Railing	State	State
Graffiti	City	County
Deck Sweeping	City	County
Bridge Drains/Drainage	City	County
Striping	City	County
Illumination	City	County
Snow Plowing	City	County
Snow Removal	City	County

[1] Cities/counties should obtain the states concurrence prior to performing non-structural asphalt deck overlays on state owned structures.

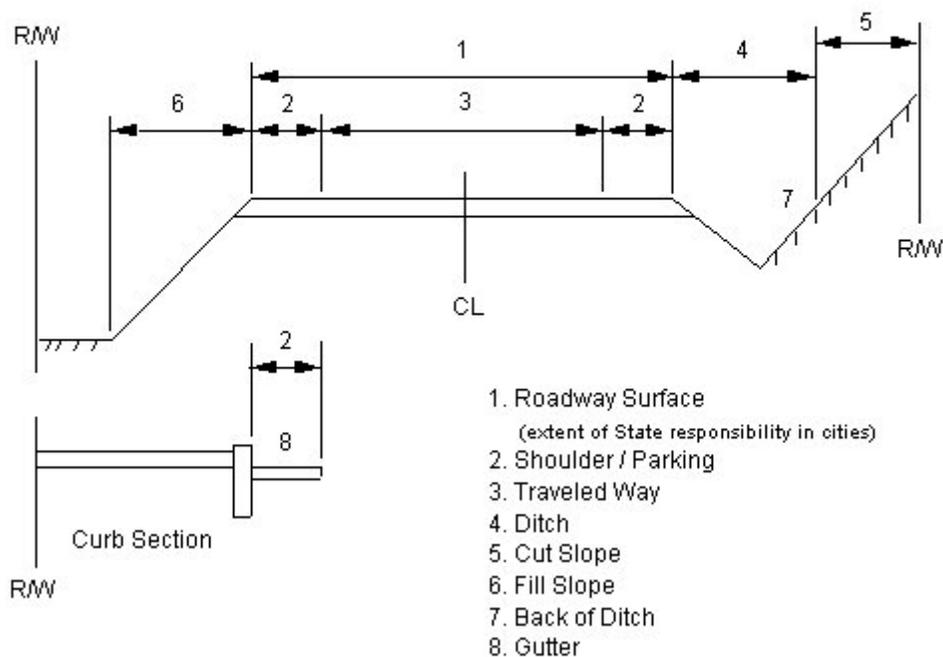
[2] Approach slab maintenance is the primary responsibility of the city/county. In the case where the state performs a structural overlay on the bridge deck, the state may extend the overlay onto the approach slab to smooth traffic flow.

[3] Joints located on the bridge deck are the responsibility of the state. Back of pavement seat joint repairs are the responsibility of the city/county unless they affect the structural integrity of the bridge.

**The State has full maintenance responsibility for bridges conveying a State Route or Interstate traffic in a limited access corridor (unless otherwise covered under a separate agreement).**

[Return to Table 3](#)

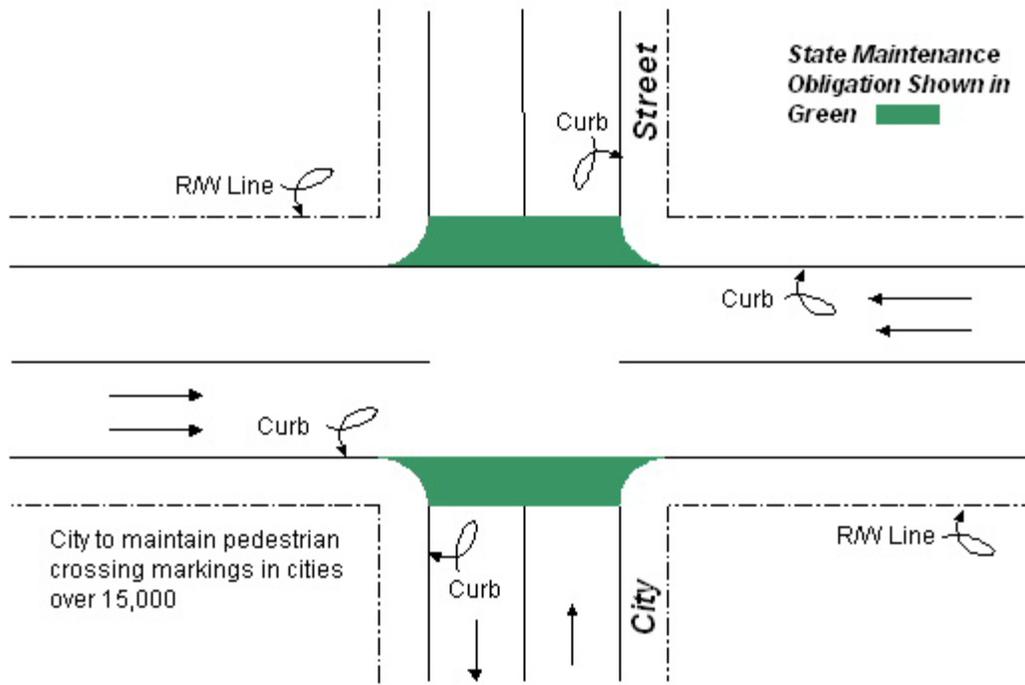
### State Highway Cross Sectional Drawing Maintenance Element Identification



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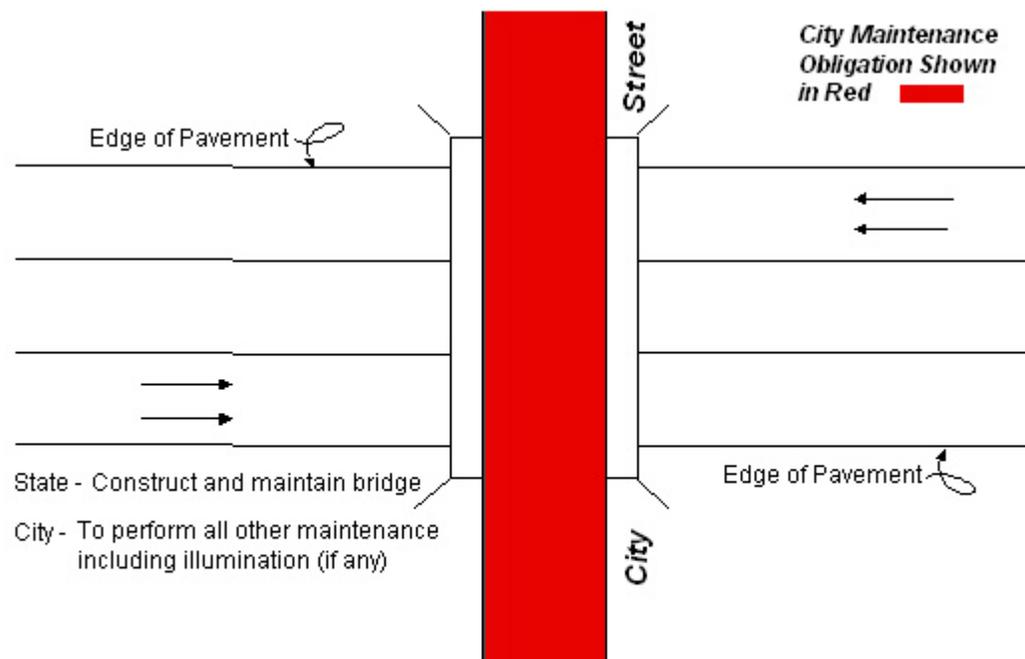
### ATTACHMENT

### Figures of WAC 468-18-050



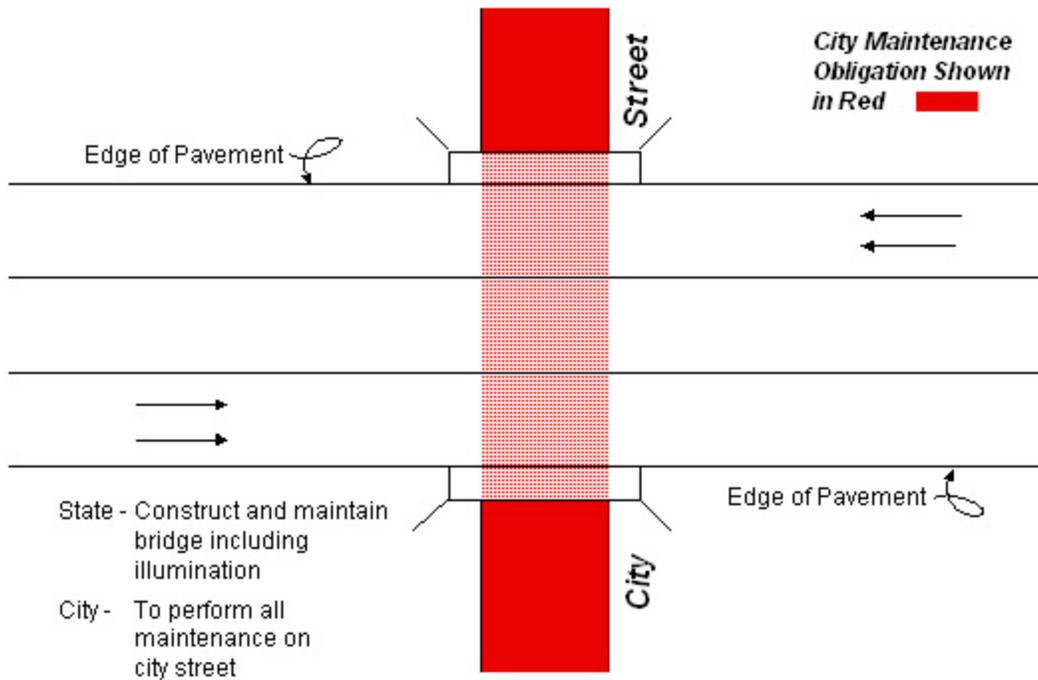
NORMAL INTERSECTION  
EXISTING STATE HIGHWAY

Figure 1



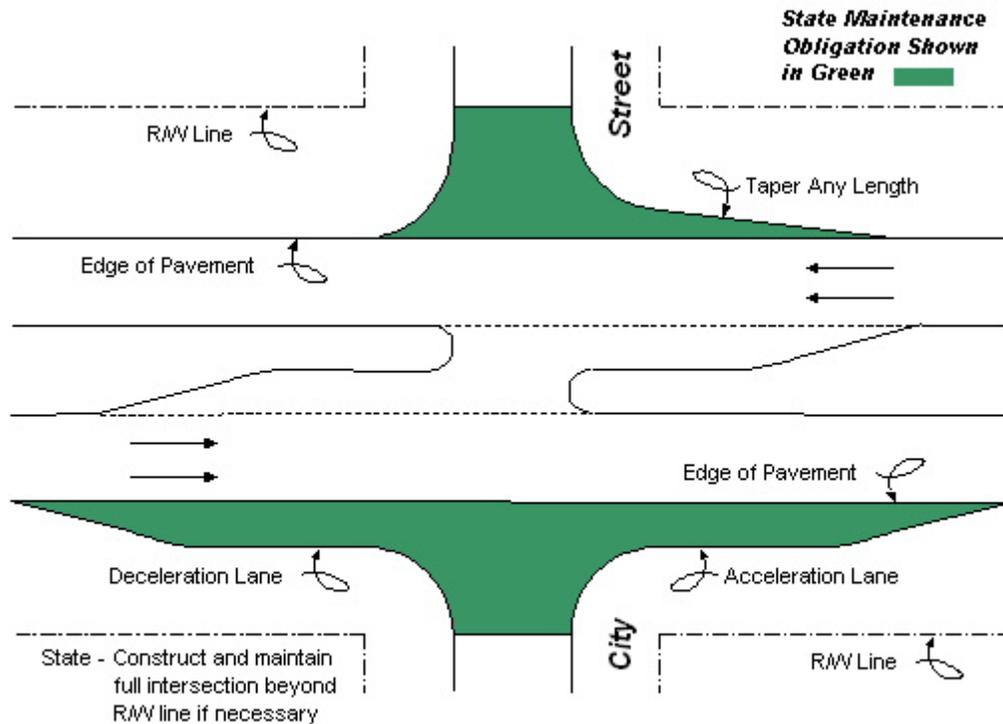
EXISTING CITY STREET CROSSED BY  
NEW STATE HIGHWAY UNDERPASS

Figure 2



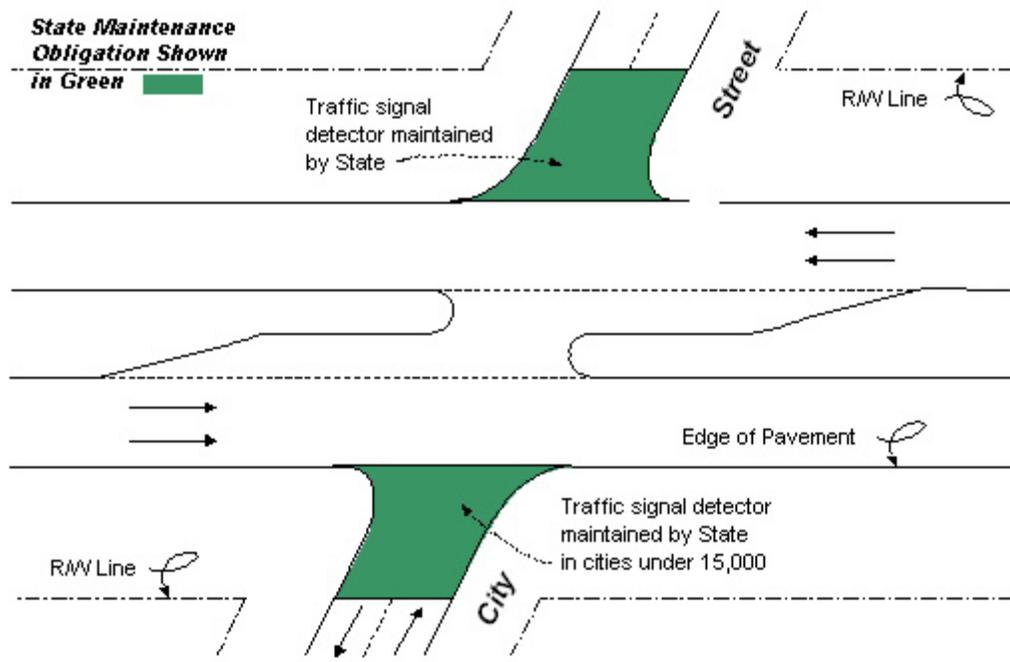
EXISTING CITY STREET CROSSED BY NEW STATE HIGHWAY OVERPASS

Figure 3



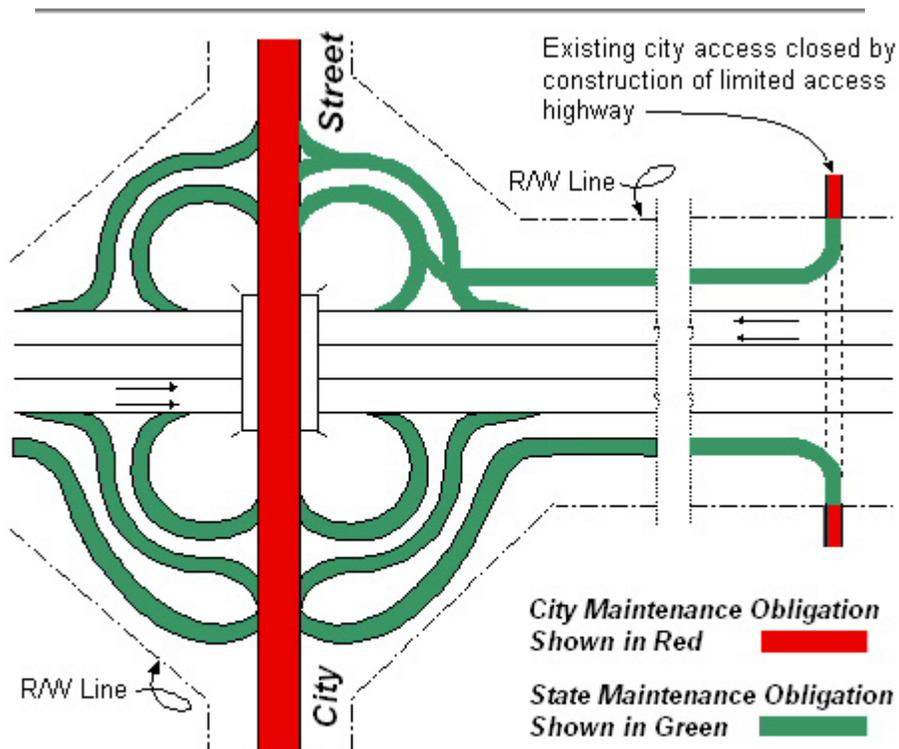
EXISTING CITY STREET CROSSED AT GRADE BY NEW STATE HIGHWAY

Figure 4



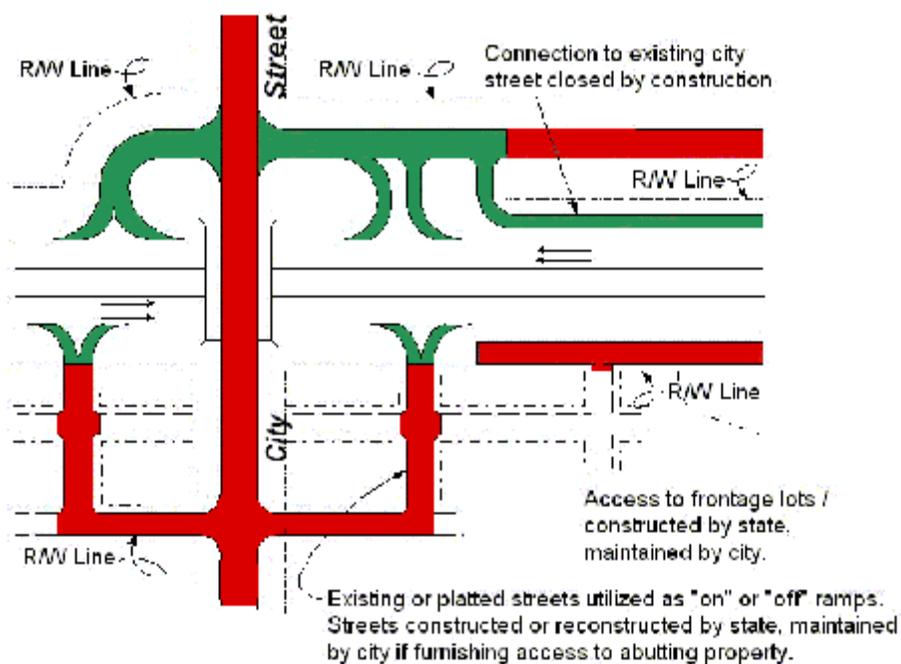
CHANNELIZED INTERSECTION  
NEW STATE HIGHWAY

Figure 5



TYPICAL LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAY

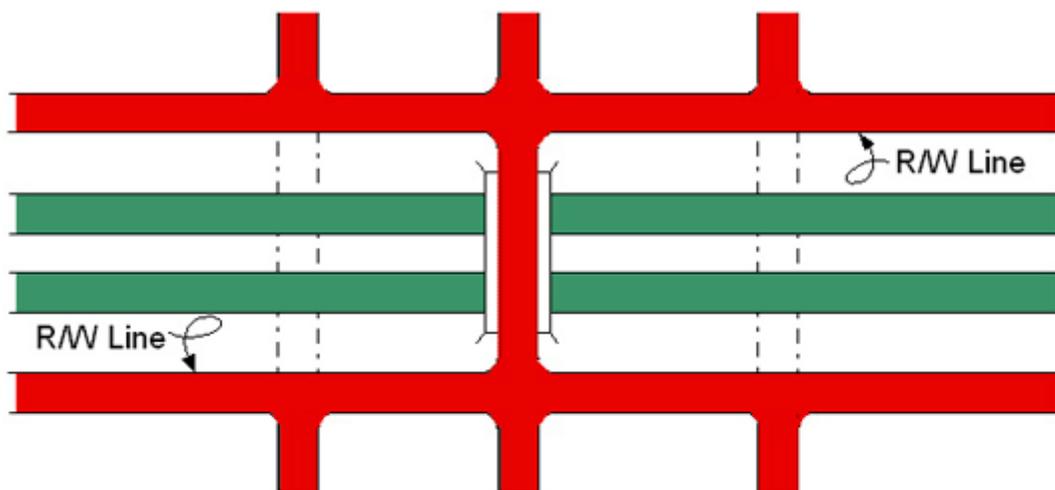
Figure 6



TYPICAL LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAY UTILIZING CITY STREETS AS "ON" AND "OFF" RAMPS

City Maintenance Obligation Shown in Red  
 State Maintenance Obligation Shown in Green

Figure 7



State - Construct and maintain bridge (structure only)  
 City - Perform all other maintenance

DEPRESSED LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAY LOCATED BETWEEN CITY STREETS

City Maintenance Obligation Shown in Red  
 State Maintenance Obligation Shown in Green

Figure 8

CONCURRENCES:

With the concurrence of WSDOT Executive Management, this report will be transmitted to WSDOT Assistant Secretaries and Regional Administrators and to the Association of Washington Cities for implementation of the agreed upon guidelines.

Respectfully submitted for acceptance,

/s/ Dave Dye  
Maintenance Engineer  
Field Operations Support  
Service Center

/s/ Dennis B. Ingham  
Assistant Secretary  
TransAid Service Center

/s/ Craig Olson  
Transportation Coord.  
Assoc. of Washington Cities

**CONCURRENCES WITH RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACCEPTANCE:**

/s/ John Conrad  
Assistant Secretary  
Field Operations Support  
Service Center

/s/ E. R. "Skip" Burch  
Assistant Secretary  
Environmental & Engineering  
Service Center

**RECOMMENDATIONS ACCEPTED:**

/s/ Stan Finkelstein  
Executive Director  
Assoc. of Washington Cities  
Final Report - April 30, 1997

/s/ S. A. Moon  
Deputy Secretary for Operations  
Department of Transportation

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